Peter L. Berger
and Thomas Luckmann

The Social Construction of Reality

A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge

Penguin Books

PENGUIN BOOKS

Published by the Penguin Group
Penguin Books Ltd, 27 Wrights Lane, London W8 5TZ, England
Penguin Putnam Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, USA
Penguin Books Australia Ltd, Ringwood, Victoria, Australia
Penguin Books Canada Ltd, 10 Alcorn Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4V 3B2
Penguin Books (NZ) Ltd, Private Bag 102902, NSMC, Auckland, New Zealand

Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices: Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England

First published in the USA 1966
Published in Great Britain by Allen Lane
The Penguin Press 1967
Published in Penguin University Books 1971
Reprinted in Peregrine Books 1979
Reprinted in Pelican Books 1984
Reprinted in Penguin Books 1991
10 9 8 7 6

Printed in England by Clays Ltd, St Ives plc
Set in Monotype Plantin

Contents

I. Internalization of Reality

Primary Socialization

Since society exists as both objective and subjective reality, any adequate theoretical understanding of it must comprehend both these aspects. As we have already argued, these aspects receive their proper recognition if society is understood in terms of an ongoing dialectical process composed of the three moments of externalization, objectivation and internalization. As far as the societal phenomenon is concerned, these moments are *not* to be thought of as occurring in a temporal sequence. Rather society and each part of it are simultaneously characterized by these three moments, so that any analysis in terms of only one or two of them falls short. The same is true of the individual member of society, who simultaneously externalizes his own being into the social world and internalizes it as an objective reality. In other words, to be in society is to participate in its dialectic.

The individual, however, is not born a member of society. He is born with a predisposition towards sociality, and he becomes a member of society. In the life of every individual, therefore, there *is* a temporal sequence, in the course of which he is inducted into participation in the societal dialectic. The beginning point of this process is internalization: the immediate apprehension or interpretation of an objective event as expressing meaning, that is, as a manifestation of another's subjective processes which thereby becomes subjectively meaningful to myself. This does not mean that I understand the other adequately. I may indeed misunderstand him: he is laughing in a fit of hysteria, but I understand his laughter as expressing mirth. But his subjectivity is nevertheless objectively available to me and becomes meaningful to me, whether or not there is congruence between his and my subjective process. Full congruence between the two subjective mean-

ings, and reciprocal knowledge of the congruence, presupposes signification, as previously discussed. However, internalization in the general sense used here underlies both signification and its own more complex forms. More precisely, internalization in this general sense is the basis, first, for an understanding of one's fellowmen and, second, for the apprehension of the world as a meaningful and social reality.[1]

This apprehension does not result from autonomous creations of meaning by isolated individuals, but begins with the individual 'taking over' the world in which others already live. To be sure, the 'taking over' is in itself, in a sense, an original process for every human organism, and the world, once 'taken over', *may* be creatively modified or (less likely) even recreated. In any case, in the complex form of internalization, I not only 'understand' the other's momentary subjective processes, I 'understand' the world in which he lives, and that world becomes my own. This presupposes that he and I share time in a more than ephemeral way and a comprehensive perspective, which links sequences of situations together intersubjectively. We now not only understand each other's definitions of shared situations, we define them reciprocally. A nexus of motivations is established between us and extends into the future. Most importantly, there is now an ongoing mutual identification between us. We not only live in the same world, we participate in each other's being.

Only when he has achieved this degree of internalization is an individual a member of society. The ontogenetic process by which this is brought about is socialization, which may thus be defined as the comprehensive and consistent induction of an individual into the objective world of a society or a sector of it. Primary socialization is the first socialization an individual undergoes in childhood, through which he becomes a member of society. Secondary socialization is any subsequent process that inducts an already socialized individual into new sectors of the objective world of his society. We may leave aside here the special question of the acquisition of knowledge about the objective world of societies other than the one of which we first became a member, and the process of internalizing such a world as reality – a process that exhibits, at

least superficially, certain similarities with both primary and secondary socialization, yet is structurally identical with neither.[2]

It is at once evident that primary socialization is usually the most important one for an individual, and that the basic structure of all secondary socialization has to resemble that of primary socialization. Every individual is born into an objective social structure within which he encounters the significant others who are in charge of his socialization.[3] These significant others are imposed upon him. Their definitions of his situation are posited for him as objective reality. He is thus born into not only an objective social structure but also an objective social world. The significant others who mediate this world to him modify it in the course of mediating it. They select aspects of it in accordance with their own location in the social structure, and also by virtue of their individual, biographically rooted idiosyncrasies. The social world is 'filtered' to the individual through this double selectivity. Thus the lower-class child not only absorbs a lower-class perspective on the social world, he absorbs it in the idiosyncratic coloration given it by his parents (or whatever other individuals are in charge of his primary socialization). The same lower-class perspective may induce a mood of contentment, resignation, bitter resentment, or seething rebelliousness. Consequently, the lower-class child will not only come to inhabit a world greatly different from that of an upper-class child, but may do so in a manner quite different from the lower-class child next door.[4]

It should hardly be necessary to add that primary socialization involves more than purely cognitive learning. It takes place under circumstances that are highly charged emotionally. Indeed, there is good reason to believe that without such emotional attachment to the significant others the learning process would be difficult if not impossible.[5] The child identifies with the significant others in a variety of emotional ways. Whatever they may be, internalization occurs only as identification occurs. The child takes on the significant others' roles and attitudes, that is, internalizes them and makes them his own. And by this identification with significant others the child becomes capable of identifying himself, of acquiring a subjec-

tively coherent and plausible identity. In other words, the self is a reflected entity, reflecting the attitudes first taken by significant others towards it;[6] the individual becomes what he is addressed as by his significant others. This is not a one-sided, mechanistic process. It entails a dialectic between identification by others and self-identification, between objectively assigned and subjectively appropriated identity. The dialectic, which is present each moment the individual *identifies with* his significant others, is, as it were, the particularization in individual life of the general dialectic of society that has already been discussed.

Although the details of this dialectic are, of course, of great importance for social psychology, it would exceed our present purpose if we were to follow up its implications for social-psychological theory.[7] What is most important for our considerations here is the fact that the individual not only takes on the roles and attitudes of others, but in the same process takes on their world. Indeed, identity is objectively defined as location in a certain world and can be subjectively appropriated only *along with* that world. Put differently, all identifications take place within horizons that imply a specific social world. The child learns that he *is* what he is called. Every name implies a nomenclature, which in turn implies a designated social location.[8] To be given an identity involves being assigned a specific place in the world. As this identity is subjectively appropriated by the child ('I *am* John Smith'), so is the world to which this identity points. Subjective appropriation of identity and subjective appropriation of the social world are merely different aspects of the *same* process of internalization, mediated by the *same* significant others.

Primary socialization creates in the child's consciousness a progressive abstraction from the roles and attitude of specific others to roles and attitudes *in general*. For example, in the internalization of norms there is a progression from, 'Mummy is angry with me *now*' to, 'Mummy is angry with me *whenever* I spill the soup'. As additional significant others (father, grandmother, older sister, and so on) support the mother's negative attitude towards soup-spilling, the generality of the norm is subjectively extended. The decisive step comes when the child recognizes that *everybody* is against soup-spilling,

and the norm is generalized to, '*One* does not spill soup' – 'one' being himself as part of a generality that includes, in principle, *all* of society in so far as it is significant to the child. This abstraction from the roles and attitudes of concrete significant others is called the generalized other.[9] Its formation within consciousness means that the individual now identifies not only with concrete others but with a generality of others, that is, with a society. Only by virtue of this generalized identification does his own self-identification attain stability and continuity. He now has not only an identity *vis-à-vis* this or that significant other, but an identity *in general*, which is subjectively apprehended as remaining the same no matter what others, significant or not, are encountered. This newly coherent identity incorporates within itself all the various internalized roles and attitudes – including, among many other things, the self-identification as a non-spiller of soups.

The formation within consciousness of the generalized other marks a decisive phase in socialization. It implies the internalization of society as such and of the objective reality established therein, and, at the same time, the subjective establishment of a coherent and continuous identity. Society, identity *and* reality are subjectively crystallized in the same process of internalization. This crystallization is concurrent with the internalization of language. Indeed, for reasons evident from the foregoing observations on language, language constitutes both the most important content and the most important instrument of socialization.

When the generalized other has been crystallized in consciousness, a symmetrical relationship is established between objective and subjective reality. What is real 'outside' corresponds to what is real 'within'. Objective reality can readily be 'translated' into subjective reality, and vice versa. Language, of course, is the principal vehicle of this ongoing translating process in both directions. It should, however, be stressed that the symmetry between objective and subjective reality cannot be complete. The two realities correspond to each other, but they are not coextensive. There is always more objective reality 'available' than is actually internalized in any individual consciousness, simply because the contents of socialization are determined by the social distribution of

knowledge. No individual internalizes the totality of what is objectivated as reality in his society, not even if the society and its world are relatively simple ones. On the other hand, there are always elements of subjective reality that have not originated in socialization, such as the awareness of one's own body prior to and apart from any socially learned apprehension of it. Subjective biography is not fully social. The individual apprehends himself as a being both inside *and* outside society.[10] This implies that the symmetry between objective and subjective reality is never a static, once-for-all state of affairs. It must always be produced and reproduced *in actu*. In other words, the relationship between the individual and the objective social world is like an ongoing balancing act. The anthropological roots of this are, of course, the same as those we discussed in connexion with the peculiar position of man in the animal kingdom.

In primary socialization there is no *problem* of identification. There is no choice of significant others. Society presents the candidate for socialization with a predefined set of significant others, whom he must accept as such with no possibility of opting for another arrangement. *Hic Rhodus, hic salta*. One must make do with the parents that fate has regaled one with. This unfair disadvantage inherent in the situation of being a child has the obvious consequence that, although the child is not simply passive in the process of his socialization, it is the adults who set the rules of the game. The child can play the game with enthusiasm or with sullen resistance. But, alas, there is no other game around. This has an important corollary. Since the child has no choice in the selection of his significant others, his identification with them is quasi-automatic. For the same reason, his internalization of their particular reality is quasi-inevitable. The child does not internalize the world of his significant others as one of many possible worlds. He internalizes it as *the* world, the only existent and only conceivable world, the world *tout court*. It is for this reason that the world internalized in primary socialization is so much more firmly entrenched in consciousness than worlds internalized in secondary socializations. However much the original sense of inevitability may be weakened in subsequent disenchantments, the recollection of a never-to-be-repeated

certainty – the certainty of the first dawn of reality – still adheres to the first world of childhood. Primary socialization thus accomplishes what (in hindsight, of course) may be seen as the most important confidence trick that society plays on the individual – to make appear as necessity what is in fact a bundle of contingencies, and thus to make meaningful the accident of his birth.

The specific contents that are internalized in primary socialization vary, of course, from society to society. Some are found everywhere. It is language that must be internalized above all. With language, and by means of it, various motivational and interpretative schemes are internalized as institutionally defined – wanting to act like a brave little boy, for instance, and assuming little boys to be naturally divided into the brave and the cowardly. These schemes provide the child with institutionalized programmes for everyday life, some immediately applicable to him, others anticipating conduct socially defined for later biographical stages – the bravery that will allow him to get through a day beset with tests of will from one's peers and from all sorts of others, and also the bravery that will be required of one later – when one is initiated as a warrior, say, or when one might be called by the god. These programmes, both the immediately applicable and the anticipatory, differentiate one's identity from that of others – such as girls, slave boys, or boys from another clan. Finally, there is internalization of at least the rudiments of the legitimating apparatus; the child learns 'why' the programmes are what they are. One must be brave because one wants to become a real man; one must perform the rituals because otherwise the gods will be angry; one must be loyal to the chief because only if one does will the gods support one in times of danger; and so on.

In primary socialization, then, the individual's first world is constructed. Its peculiar quality of firmness is to be accounted for, at least in part, by the inevitability of the individual's relationship to his very first significant others. The world of childhood, in its luminous reality, is thus conducive to confidence not only in the persons of the significant others but in their definitions of the situation. The world of childhood is massively and indubitably real.[11] Probably this could not be

otherwise at this stage in the development of consciousness. Only later can the individual afford the luxury of at least a modicum of doubt. And probably this necessity of a proto-realism in the apprehension of the world pertains phylogenetically as well as ontogenetically.[12] In any case, the world of childhood is so constituted as to instil in the individual a nomic structure in which he may have confidence that 'everything is all right' – to repeat what is possibly the most frequent sentence mothers say to their crying offspring. The later discovery that some things are far from 'all right' may be more or less shocking, depending on biographical circumstances, but in either case the world of childhood is likely to retain its peculiar reality in retrospection. It remains the 'home world', however far one may travel from it in later life into regions where one does not feel at home at all.

Primary socialization involves learning sequences that are socially defined. At age *A* the child should learn *X*, at age *B* he should learn *Y*, and so on. Every such programme entails some social recognition of biological growth and differentiation. Thus every programme, in any society, must recognize that a one-year-old child cannot be expected to learn what a three-year-old can. Also, most programmes are likely to define the matter differently for boys and girls. Such minimal recognition is, of course, imposed on society by biological facts. Beyond this, however, there is great socio-historical variability in the definition of the stages in the learning sequence. What is still defined as childhood in one society may be defined as well into adulthood in another. And the social implications of childhood may vary greatly from one society to another – for instance, in terms of emotional qualities, moral accountability, or intellectual capacities. Contemporary Western civilization (at least prior to the Freudian movement) tended to regard children as naturally 'innocent' and 'sweet'; other societies considered them 'by nature sinful and unclean', different from adults only in terms of their strength and understanding. There have been similar variations in terms of children's availability, for sexual activity, criminal responsibility, divine inspiration, and so on. Such variations in the social definition of childhood and its stages will obviously affect the learning programme.[13]

The character of primary socialization is also affected by the requirements of the stock of knowledge to be transmitted. Certain legitimations may require a higher degree of linguistic complexity for their understanding than others. We might guess, for instance, that a child would need less words to understand that he must not masturbate because that makes his guardian angel angry than to understand the argument that masturbation will interfere with his later sexual adjustment. The requirements of the overall institutional order will further affect primary socialization. Different skills are required at different ages in one society as against another, or indeed in varying sectors of the same society. The age at which, in one society, it may be deemed proper for a child to be able to drive an automobile may, in another, be the age at which he is expected to have killed his first enemy. An upper-class child may learn the 'facts of life' at an age when a lower-class child has mastered the rudiments of abortion technique. Or, an upper-class child may experience his first stirrings of patriotic emotion about the time that his lower-class contemporary first experiences hatred of the police and everything they stand for.

Primary socialization ends when the concept of the generalized other (and all that goes with it) has been established in the consciousness of the individual. At this point he is an effective member of society and in subjective possession of a self and a world. But this internalization of society, identity and reality is not a matter of once and for all. Socialization is never total and never finished. This presents us with two further problems: First, how the reality internalized in primary socialization is maintained in consciousness, and second, how further internalizations – or secondary socializations – in the later biography of the individual take place. We will take up these problems in reverse order.

Secondary Socialization ✻

It is possible to conceive of a society in which no further socialization takes place after primary socialization. Such a

society would, of course, be one with a very simple stock of knowledge. All knowledge would be generally relevant, with different individuals varying only in their perspectives on it. This conception is useful in positing a limiting case, but there is no society known to us that does not have *some* division of labour and, concomitantly, *some* social distribution of knowledge; and as soon as this is the case, secondary socialization becomes necessary.

Secondary socialization is the internalization of institutional or institution-based 'sub-worlds'. Its extent and character are therefore determined by the complexity of the division of labour and the concomitant social distribution of knowledge. Of course, generally relevant knowledge, too, may be socially distributed – for example, in the form of class-based 'versions' – but what we have in mind here is the social distribution of 'special knowledge' – knowledge that arises as a result of the division of labour and whose 'carriers' are institutionally defined. Forgetting for a moment its other dimensions, we may say that secondary socialization is the acquisition of role-specific knowledge, the roles being directly or indirectly rooted in the division of labour. There is some justification for such a narrow definition, but this is by no means the whole story. Secondary socialization requires the acquisition of role-specific vocabularies, which means, for one thing, the internalization of semantic fields structuring routine interpretations and conduct within an institutional area. At the same time 'tacit understandings', evaluations and affective colorations of these semantic fields are also acquired. The 'sub-worlds' internalized in secondary socialization are generally partial realities in contrast to the 'base-world' acquired in primary socialization. Yet they, too, are more or less cohesive realities, characterized by normative and affective as well as cognitive components.

Furthermore, they, too, require at least the rudiments of a legitimating apparatus, often accompanied by ritual or material symbols. For example, a differentiation may arise between foot soldiers and cavalry. The latter will have to have special training, which will probably involve more than learning the purely physical skills necessary to handle military horses. The language of the cavalry will become quite different from that

of the infantry. A terminology will be built up referring to horses, their qualities and uses, and to situations arising as a result of cavalry life, which will be quite irrelevant to the foot soldier. The cavalry will also use a different language in more than an instrumental sense. An angry infantryman swears by making reference to his aching feet, while the cavalryman may mention his horse's backside. In other words, a body of images and allegories is built up on the instrumental basis of cavalry language. This role-specific language is internalized *in toto* by the individual as he is trained for mounted combat. He becomes a cavalryman not only by acquiring the requisite skills but by becoming capable of understanding and using this language. He can then communicate with his fellow-horsemen in allusions rich in meaning to them but quite obtuse to men in the infantry. It goes without saying that this process of internalization entails subjective identification with the role and its appropriate norms – 'I am a horseman', 'A horseman never lets the enemy see the tail of his mount', 'Never let a woman forget the feel of the spurs', 'A fast rider in war, a fast rider in gambling', and so forth. As the need arises, this body of meanings will be sustained by legitimations, ranging from simple maxims like the foregoing to elaborate mythological constructions. Finally, there may be a variety of representative ceremonies and physical objects – say, the annual celebration of the feast of the horse-god at which all meals are taken on horseback and the newly initiated horsemen receive the horse-tail fetishes they will henceforth carry around their necks.

The character of such secondary socialization depends upon the status of the body of knowledge concerned within the symbolic universe as a whole. Training is necessary to learn to make a horse pull a manure cart or to fight on it in battle. But a society that limits its use of horses to the pulling of manure carts is unlikely to embellish this activity with elaborate rituals or fetishism, and the personnel to whom this task has been assigned is unlikely to identify with the role in any profound manner; the legitimations, such as they are, are likely to be of a compensatory kind. Thus there is a great deal of socio-historical variability in the representations involved in secondary socialization. In most societies, however, some rituals accompany the transition from primary to secondary socialization.[14]

The formal processes of secondary socialization are determined by its fundamental problem: it always presupposes a preceding process of primary socialization; that is, that it must deal with an already formed self and an already internalized world. It cannot construct subjective reality *ex nihilo*. This presents a problem because the already internalized reality has a tendency to persist. Whatever new contents are now to be internalized must somehow be superimposed upon this already present reality. There is, therefore, a problem of consistency between the original and the new internalizations. The problem may be more or less difficult of solution in different cases. Having learned that cleanliness is a virtue in one's own person, it is not difficult to transfer the same virtue to one's horse. But having learned that certain obscenities are reprehensible as a pedestrian child, it may need some explanation that they are now *de rigueur* as a member of the cavalry. To establish and maintain consistency, secondary socialization presupposes conceptual procedures to integrate different bodies of knowledge.

In secondary socialization, biological limitations become decreasingly important to the learning sequences, which now come to be established in terms of intrinsic properties of the knowledge to be acquired; that is, in terms of the foundational structure of that knowledge. For example, in order to learn certain hunting techniques one must first learn mountain-climbing; or in order to learn calculus one must first learn algebra. The learning sequences can also be manipulated in terms of the vested interests of the personnel administering the body of knowledge. For example, it can be established that one must learn divination from animal entrails before one can learn divination from the flight of birds, or that one must have a high-school diploma before one can enrol in an embalming school, or that one must pass an examination in Gaelic before being eligible for a position in the Irish civil service. Such stipulations are extrinsic to the knowledge pragmatically required for the performance of the roles of diviner, embalmer or Irish civil servant. They are established institutionally to enhance the prestige of the roles in question or to meet other ideological interests. A grade-school education may be perfectly sufficient to grasp the curriculum of an

embalming school, and Irish civil servants carry on their normal business in the English language. It may even happen that the learning sequences thus manipulated are pragmatically disfunctional. For instance, it may be stipulated that a college background in 'general culture' should precede the professional training of research sociologists, while their actual activities might in fact be more efficiently carried on if they were unburdened with 'culture' of this sort.

While primary socialization cannot take place without an emotionally charged identification of the child with his significant others, most secondary socialization can dispense with this kind of identification and proceed effectively with only the amount of mutual identification that enters into any communication between human beings. Put crudely, it is necessary to love one's mother, but not one's teacher. Socialization in later life typically begins to take on an affectivity reminiscent of childhood when it seeks radically to transform the subjective reality of the individual. This posits special problems that we shall analyse a little further on.

In primary socialization the child does not apprehend his significant others as institutional functionaries, but as mediators of reality *tout court*; the child internalizes the world of his parents as *the* world, and not as the world appertaining to a specific institutional context. Some of the crises that occur after primary socialization are indeed caused by the recognition that the world of one's parents is *not* the only world there is, but has a very specific social location, perhaps even one with a pejorative connotation. For example, the older child comes to recognize that the world represented by his parents, the same world that he had previously taken for granted as inevitable reality, is actually the world of uneducated, lower-class, rural Southerners. In secondary socialization, the institutional context is usually apprehended. Needless to say, this need not involve a sophisticated understanding of all the implications of the institutional context. Yet the Southern child, to stay within the same example, does apprehend his school teacher as an institutional functionary in a way he never did his parents, and he understands the teacher's role as representing institutionally specific meanings – such as those of the nation as against the region, of the national middle-class

world as against the lower-class ambience of his home, of the city as against the countryside. Hence the social interaction between teachers and learners can be formalized. The teachers need not be significant others in any sense of the word. They are institutional functionaries with the formal assignment of transmitting specific knowledge. The roles of secondary socialization carry a high degree of anonymity; that is, they are readily detached from their individual performers. The same knowledge taught by one teacher could also be taught by another. Any functionary of this type could teach this type of knowledge. The individual functionaries may, of course, be subjectively differentiated in various ways (as more or less congenial, better or worse teachers of arithmetic, and so on), but they are in principle interchangeable.

This formality and anonymity are, of course, linked with the affective character of social relations in secondary socialization. Their most important consequence, however, is to bestow on the contents of what is learned in secondary socialization much less subjective inevitability than the contents of primary socialization possess. Therefore, the reality accent of knowledge internalized in secondary socialization is more easily bracketed (that is, the subjective sense that these internalizations are real is more fugitive). It takes severe biographical shocks to disintegrate the massive reality internalized in early childhood; much less to destroy the realities internalized later. Beyond this, it is relatively easy to set aside the reality of the secondary internalizations. The child lives willy-nilly in the world as defined by his parents, but he can cheerfully leave the world of arithmetic behind him as soon as he leaves the classroom.

This makes it possible to detach a part of the self and its concomitant reality as relevant only to the role-specific situation in question. The individual then establishes distance between his total self and its reality on the one hand, and the role-specific partial self and its reality on the other.[15] This important feat is possible only after primary socialization has taken place. Put crudely once more, it is easier for the child 'to hide' from his teacher than from his mother. Conversely, it is possible to say that the development of this capacity 'to hide' is an important aspect of the process of growing into adulthood.

The reality accent of knowledge internalized in primary socialization is given quasi-automatically. In secondary socialization it must be reinforced by specific pedagogic techniques, 'brought home' to the individual. The phrase is suggestive. The original reality of childhood is 'home'. It posits itself as such, inevitably and, as it were, 'naturally'. By comparison with it, all later realities are 'artificial'. Thus the school teacher tries to 'bring home' the contents he is imparting by making them vivid (that is, making them seem as alive as the 'home world' of the child), relevant (that is, linking them to the relevance structures already present in the 'home world') and interesting (that is, inducing the attentiveness of the child to detach itself from its 'natural' objects to these more 'artificial' ones). These manoeuvres are necessary because an internalized reality is already there, persistently 'in the way' of new internalizations. The degree and precise character of these pedagogic techniques will vary with the motivations the individual has for the acquisition of the new knowledge.

The more these techniques make subjectively plausible a continuity between the original and the new elements of knowledge, the more readily they acquire the accent of reality. One learns a second language by building on the taken-for-granted reality of one's 'mother tongue'. For a long time, one continually retranslates into the original language whatever elements of the new language one is acquiring. Only in this way can the new language begin to have any reality. As this reality comes to be established in its own right, it slowly becomes possible to forego retranslation. One becomes capable of 'thinking in' the new language. Nevertheless, it is rare that a language learned in later life attains the inevitable, self-evident reality of the first language learned in childhood. Hence derives, of course, the affective quality of the 'mother tongue'. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same characteristics of building from the 'home' reality, linking up with it as learning proceeds and only slowly breaking this linkage, appertain to other learning sequences in secondary socialization.

The facts that the processes of secondary socialization do not presuppose a high degree of identification and its contents do not possess the quality of inevitability can be pragmatically useful because they permit learning sequences that are rational

and emotionally controlled. But because the contents of this type of internalization have a brittle and unreliable subjective reality compared to the internalizations of primary socialization, in some cases special techniques must be developed to produce whatever identification and inevitability are deemed necessary. The need for such techniques may be intrinsic in terms of learning and applying the contents of internalization, or it may be posited for the sake of the vested interests of the personnel administering the socialization process in question. For example, an individual who wants to become an accomplished musician must immerse himself in his subject to a degree quite unnecessary for an individual learning to be an engineer. Engineering education can take place effectively through formal, highly rational, emotionally neutral processes. Musical education, on the other hand, typically involves much higher identification with a maestro and a much more profound immersion in musical reality. This difference comes from the intrinsic differences between engineering and musical knowledge, and between the ways of life in which these two bodies of knowledge are practically applied. A professional revolutionary, too, needs an immeasurably higher degree of identification and inevitability than an engineer. But here the necessity comes not from intrinsic properties of the knowledge itself, which may be quite simple and sparse in content, but from the personal commitment required of a revolutionary in terms of the vested interests of the revolutionary movement. Sometimes the necessity for the intensifying techniques may come from both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The socialization of religious personnel is one example.

The techniques applied in such cases are designed to intensify the affective charge of the socialization process. Typically, they involve the institutionalization of an elaborate initiation process, a novitiate, in the course of which the individual comes to commit himself fully to the reality that is being internalized. When the process requires an actual transformation of the individual's 'home' reality, it comes to replicate as closely as possible the character of primary socialization, as we shall see a little later. But even short of such transformation, secondary socialization becomes affectively charged to the degree to which immersion in and commitment to the new

reality are institutionally defined as necessary. The relationship of the individual to the socializing personnel becomes correspondingly charged with 'significance', that is, the socializing personnel take on the character of significant others *vis-à-vis* the individual being socialized. The individual then commits himself in a comprehensive way to the new reality. He 'gives himself' to music, to the revolution, to the faith, not just partially but with what is subjectively the whole of his life. The readiness to sacrifice oneself is, of course, the final consequence of this type of socialization.

An important circumstance that may posit a need for such intensification is competition between the reality-defining personnel of various institutions. In the case of revolutionary training the intrinsic problem is the socialization of the individual in a counter-definition of reality – counter, that is, to the definitions of the 'official' legitimators of the society. But there will also have to be intensification in the socialization of the musician in a society that offers sharp competition to the aesthetic values of the musical community. For example, it may be assumed that a musician in the making in contemporary America must commit himself to music with an emotional intensity that was unnecessary in nineteenth-century Vienna, precisely because in the American situation there is powerful competition from what will subjectively appear as the 'materialistic' and 'mass culture' world of the 'rat race'. Similarly, religious training in a pluralistic situation posits the need for 'artificial' techniques of reality-accentuation that are unnecessary in a situation dominated by a religious monopoly. It is still 'natural' to become a Catholic priest in Rome in a way that it is not in America. Consequently, American theological seminaries must cope with the problem of 'reality-slipping' and devise techniques for 'making stick' the same reality. Not surprisingly, they have hit upon the obvious expedient of sending their most promising students to Rome for a while.

Similar variations may exist within the same institutional context, depending upon the tasks assigned to different categories of personnel. Thus the degree of commitment to the military required of career officers is quite different from that required of draftees, a fact clearly reflected in the respective

training processes. Similarly, different commitments to the institutional reality are demanded from an executive and from lower-echelon white-collar personnel, from a psycho-analyst and from a psychiatric social worker, and so forth. An executive must be 'politically sound' in a way not incumbent on the supervisor of the typing pool, and a 'didactic analysis' is imposed upon the psycho-analyst but only suggested to the social worker, and so on. There are, then, highly differentiated systems of secondary socialization in complex institutions, sometimes geared very sensitively to the differential requirements of the various categories of institutional personnel.[16]

The institutionalized distribution of tasks between primary and secondary socialization varies with the complexity of the social distribution of knowledge. As long as it is relatively uncomplicated, the same institutional agency can proceed from primary to secondary socialization and carry on the latter to a considerable extent. In cases of very high complexity, specialized agencies for secondary socialization may have to be developed, with full-time personnel specially trained for the educational tasks in question. Short of this degree of specialization, there may be a sequence of socializing agencies combining this task with others. In the latter case, for example, it may be established that at a certain age a boy is transferred from his mother's hut to the warriors' barracks, where he will be trained to become a horseman. This need not entail full-time educational personnel. The older horsemen may teach the younger ones. The development of modern education is, of course, the best illustration of secondary socialization taking place under the auspices of specialized agencies. The resultant decline in the position of the family with regard to secondary socialization is too well known to require further elaboration here.[17]

Maintenance and Transformation of Subjective Reality ✻

Since socialization is never complete and the contents it internalizes face continuing threats to their subjective reality, every

viable society must develop procedures of reality-maintenance to safeguard a measure of symmetry between objective and subjective reality. We have already discussed this problem in connexion with legitimation. Our focus here is on the defence of subjective rather than objective reality; reality as apprehended in individual consciousness rather than on reality as institutionally defined.

Primary socialization internalizes a reality apprehended as inevitable. This internalization may be deemed successful if the sense of inevitability is present most of the time, at least while the individual is active in the world of everyday life. But even when the world of everyday life retains its massive and taken-for-granted reality *in actu*, it is threatened by the marginal situations of human experience that cannot be completely bracketed in everyday activity. There is always the haunting presence of metamorphoses, those actually remembered and those only sensed as sinister possibilities. There are also the more directly threatening competing definitions of reality that may be encountered socially. It is one thing for a well-behaved man to dream of unspeakable orgies in nocturnal solitude. It is quite another to see these dreams empirically enacted by a libertarian colony next door. Dreams can more easily be quarantined within consciousness as 'nonsense' to be shrugged aside or as mental aberrations to be silently repented; they retain the character of phantasms *vis-à-vis* the reality of everyday life. An actual acting-out forces itself upon consciousness much more clamorously. It may have to be destroyed in fact before it can be coped with in the mind. In any case, it cannot be denied as one can at least try to deny the metamorphoses of marginal situations.

The more 'artificial' character of secondary socialization makes the subjective reality of its internalizations even more vulnerable to challenging definitions of reality, not because they are not taken for granted or are apprehended as less than real in everyday life, but because their reality is less deeply rooted in consciousness and thus more susceptible to displacement. For example, both the prohibition on nudity, which is related to one's sense of shame and internalized in primary socialization, and the canons of proper dress for different social occasions, which are acquired as secondary internaliza-

tions, are taken for granted in everyday life. As long as they are not socially challenged, neither constitutes a problem for the individual. However, the challenge would have to be much stronger in the former case than in the latter to crystallize as a threat to the taken-for-granted reality of the routines in question. A relatively minor shift in the subjective definition of reality would suffice for an individual to take for granted that one may go to the office without a tie. A much more drastic shift would be necessary to have him go, as a matter of course, without any clothes at all. The former shift could be socially mediated by nothing more than a change of job – say, from a rural to a metropolitan college campus. The latter would entail a social revolution in the individual's milieu; it would be subjectively apprehended as a profound conversion, probably after an initially intense resistance.

The reality of secondary internalizations is less threatened by marginal situations, because it is usually irrelevant to them. What may happen is that such reality is apprehended as trivial precisely because its irrelevance to the marginal situation is revealed. Thus it may be said that the imminence of death profoundly threatens the reality of one's previous self-identifications as a man, a moral being, or a Christian. One's self-identification as an assistant manager in the ladies' hosiery department is not so much threatened as trivialized in the same situation. Conversely, it may be said that the maintenance of primary internalizations in the face of marginal situations is a fair measure of their subjective reality. The same test would be quite irrelevant when applied to most secondary socializations. It makes sense to die as a man, hardly to die as an assistant manager in the ladies' hosiery department. Again, where secondary internalizations are socially expected to have this degree of reality-persistence in the face of marginal situations, the concomitant socialization procedures will have to be intensified and reinforced in the manner discussed before. Religious and military processes of secondary socialization could again be cited in illustration.

It is convenient to distinguish between two general types of reality-maintenance – routine maintenance and crisis maintenance. The former is designed to maintain the internalized reality in everyday life, the latter in situations of crises. Both

entail fundamentally the same social processes, though some differences must be noted.

As we have seen, the reality of everyday life maintains itself by being embodied in routines, which is the essence of institutionalization. Beyond this, however, the reality of everyday life is ongoingly reaffirmed in the individual's interaction with others. Just as reality is originally internalized by a social process, so it is maintained in consciousness by social processes. These latter processes are not drastically different from those of the earlier internalization. They also reflect the basic fact that subjective reality must stand in a relationship with an objective reality that is socially defined.

In the social process of reality-maintenance it is possible to distinguish between significant others and less important others.[18] In an important way all, or at least most, of the others encountered by the individual in everyday life serve to reaffirm his subjective reality. This occurs even in a situation as 'non-significant' as riding on a commuter train. The individual may not know anyone on the train and may speak to no one. All the same, the crowd of fellow-commuters reaffirms the basic structure of everyday life. By their overall conduct the fellow-commuters extract the individual from the tenuous reality of early-morning grogginess and proclaim to him in no uncertain terms that the world consists of earnest men going to work, of responsibility and schedules, of the New Haven Railroad and the *New York Times*. The last, of course, reaffirms the widest coordinates of the individual's reality. From the weather report to the help-wanted ads it assures him that he is, indeed, in the most real world possible. Concomitantly, it affirms the less-than-real status of the sinister ecstasies experienced before breakfast – the alien shape of allegedly familiar objects upon waking from a disturbing dream, the shock of non-recognition of one's own face in the bathroom mirror, the unspeakable suspicion a little later that one's wife and children are mysterious strangers. Most individuals susceptible to such metaphysical terrors manage to exorcize them to a degree in the course of their rigidly performed morning rituals, so that the reality of everyday life is at least gingerly established by the time they step out of their front door. But the reality begins to be fairly reliable only in the anonymous community of the

commuter train. It attains massivity as the train pulls into Grand Central Station. *Ergo sum*, the individual can now murmur to himself, and proceed to the office wide-awake and self-assured.

It would, therefore, be a mistake to assume that only significant others serve to maintain subjective reality. But significant others occupy a central position in the economy of reality-maintenance. They are particularly important for the ongoing confirmation of that crucial element of reality we call identity. To retain confidence that he is indeed who he thinks he is, the individual requires not only the implicit confirmation of this identity that even casual everyday contacts will supply, but the explicit and emotionally charged confirmation that his significant others bestow on him. In the previous illustration, our suburbanite is likely to look to his family and other private associates within the family ambience (neighbourhood, church, club, and the like) for such confirmation, though close business associates may also fulfil this function. If he moreover sleeps with his secretary, his identity is both confirmed and amplified. This assumes that the individual likes the identity being confirmed. The same process pertains to the confirmation of identities that the individual may not like. Even casual acquaintances may confirm his self-identification as a hopeless failure, but wife, children and secretary ratify this with undeniable finality. The process from objective reality-definition to subjective reality-maintenance is the same in both cases.

The significant others in the individual's life are the principal agents for the maintenance of his subjective reality. Less significant others function as a sort of chorus. Wife, children and secretary solemnly reaffirm each day that one is a man of importance, or a hopeless failure; maiden aunts, cooks and elevator operators lend varying degrees of support to this. It is, of course, quite possible that there is some disagreement between these people. The individual then faces a problem of consistency, which he can, typically, solve either by modifying his reality or his reality-maintaining relationships. He may have the alternative of accepting his identity as a failure on the one hand, or of firing his secretary or divorcing his wife on the other. He also has the option of downgrading some of

these people from their status of significant others and turning instead to others for his significant reality-confirmations – his psycho-analyst, say, or his old cronies at the club. There are many possible complexities in this organization of reality-maintaining relationships, especially in a highly mobile and role-differentiated society.[19]

The relation between the significant others and the 'chorus' in reality-maintenance is a dialectical one; that is, they interact with each other as well as with the subjective reality they serve to confirm. A solidly negative identification on the part of the wider milieu may eventually affect the identification offered by the significant others – when even the elevator operator fails to say 'sir', the wife may give up her identification of her husband as a man of importance. Conversely, the significant others may eventually have an effect on the wider milieu – a 'loyal' wife can be an asset in several ways as the individual seeks to get across a certain identity to his business associates. Reality-maintenance and reality-confirmation thus involve the totality of the individual's social situation, though the significant others occupy a privileged position in these processes.

The relative importance of the significant others and the 'chorus' can be seen most easily if one looks at instances of *dis*-confirmation of subjective reality. A reality-disconfirming act by the wife, taken by itself, has far greater potency than a similar act by a casual acquaintance. Acts by the latter have to acquire a certain density to equal the potency of the former. The reiterated opinion of one's best friend that the newspapers are not reporting substantial developments going on beneath the surface may carry more weight than the same opinion expressed by one's barber. However, the same opinion expressed in succession by ten casual acquaintances may begin to outweigh a contrary opinion of one's best friend. The crystallization subjectively arrived at as a result of these various definitions of reality will then determine how one is likely to react to the appearance of a solid phalanx of grim, silent, briefcase-carrying Chinese on the commuter train one morning; that is, will determine the weight one gives the phenomenon in one's own definition of reality. To take another illustration, if one is a believing Catholic the reality of one's faith need not be

threatened by non-believing business associates. It is very likely to be threatened, however, by a non-believing wife. In a pluralistic society, therefore, it is logical for the Catholic Church to tolerate a broad variety of inter-faith associations in economic and political life, but to continue to frown on inter-faith marriage. Generally speaking, in situations where there is competition between different reality-defining agencies, all sorts of secondary-group relationships with the competitors may be tolerated, as long as there are firmly established primary-group relationships within which *one* reality is ongoingly reaffirmed against the competitors.[20] The manner in which the Catholic Church has adapted itself to the pluralistic situation in America is an excellent illustration.

The most important vehicle of reality-maintenance is conversation. One may view the individual's everyday life in terms of the working away of a conversational apparatus that ongoingly maintains, modifies and reconstructs his subjective reality.[21] Conversation means mainly, of course, that people speak with one another. This does not deny the rich aura of non-verbal communication that surrounds speech. Nevertheless speech retains a privileged position in the total conversational apparatus. It is important to stress, however, that the greater part of reality-maintenance in conversation is implicit, not explicit. Most conversation does not in so many words define the nature of the world. Rather, it takes place against the background of a world that is silently taken for granted. Thus an exchange such as, 'Well, it's time for me to get to the station', and 'Fine, darling, have a good day at the office', implies an entire world *within which* these apparently simple propositions make sense. By virtue of this implication the exchange confirms the subjective reality of this world.

If this is understood, one will readily see that the great part, if not all, of everyday conversation maintains subjective reality. Indeed, its massivity is achieved by the accumulation and consistency of casual conversation – conversation that can *afford to be casual* precisely because it refers to the routines of a taken-for-granted world. The loss of casualness signals a break in the routines and, at least potentially, a threat to the taken-for-granted reality. Thus one may imagine the effect on casualness of an exchange like this: 'Well, it's time for me to

get to the station', 'Fine, darling, don't forget to take along your gun.'

At the same time that the conversational apparatus ongoingly maintains reality, it ongoingly modifies it. Items are dropped and added, weakening some sectors of what is still being taken for granted and reinforcing others. Thus the subjective reality of something that is never talked about comes to be shaky. It is one thing to engage in an embarrassing sexual act. It is quite another to talk about it beforehand or afterwards. Conversely, conversation gives firm contours to items previously apprehended in a fleeting and unclear manner. One may have doubts about one's religion; these doubts become real in a quite different way as one discusses them. One then 'talks oneself into' these doubts; they are objectified as reality within one's own consciousness. Generally speaking, the conversational apparatus maintains reality by 'talking through' various elements of experience and allocating them a definite place in the real world.

This reality-generating potency of conversation is already given in the fact of linguistic objectification. We have seen how language objectifies the world, transforming the *panta rhei* of experience into a cohesive order. In the establishment of this order language *realizes* a world, in the double sense of apprehending and producing it. Conversation is the actualizing of this realizing efficacy of language in the face-to-face situations of individual existence. In conversation the objectifications of language become objects of individual consciousness. Thus the fundamental reality-maintaining fact is the continuing use of the same language to objectify unfolding biographical experience. In the widest sense, all who employ this same language are reality-maintaining others. The significance of this can be further differentiated in terms of what is meant by a 'common language' – from the group-idiosyncratic language of primary groups to regional or class dialects to the national community that defines itself in terms of language. There are corresponding 'returns to reality' for the individual who goes back to the few individuals who understand his in-group allusions, to the section to which his accent belongs, or to the large collectivity that has identified itself with a particular linguistic tradition – in reverse order, say, a return to the

United States, to Brooklyn, and to the people who went to the same public school.

In order to maintain subjective reality effectively, the conversational apparatus must be continual and consistent. Disruptions of continuity or consistency *ipso facto* posit a threat to the subjective reality in question. We have already discussed the expedients that the individual may adopt to meet the threat of inconsistency. Various techniques to cope with the threat of discontinuity are also available. The use of correspondence to continue significant conversation despite physical separation may serve as an illustration.[22] Different conversations can be compared in terms of the density of the reality they produce or maintain. On the whole, frequency of conversation enhances its reality-generating potency, but lack of frequency can sometimes be compensated for by the intensity of the conversation when it does take place. One may see one's lover only once a month, but the conversation then engaged in is of sufficient intensity to make up for its relative infrequency. Certain conversations may also be explicitly defined and legitimated as having a privileged status – such as conversations with one's confessor, one's psycho-analyst, or a similar 'authority' figure. The 'authority' here lies in the cognitively and normatively superior status that is assigned to these conversations.

Subjective reality is thus always dependent upon specific plausibility structures, that is, the specific social base and social processes required for its maintenance. One can maintain one's self-identification as a man of importance only in a milieu that confirms this identity; one can maintain one's Catholic faith only if one retains one's significant relationship with the Catholic community; and so forth. Disruption of significant conversation with the mediators of the respective plausibility structures threatens the subjective realities in question. As the example of correspondence indicates, the individual may resort to various techniques of reality-maintenance even in the absence of actual conversation, but the reality-generating potency of these techniques is greatly inferior to the face-to-face conversations they are designed to replicate. The longer these techniques are isolated from face-to-face confirmations, the less likely they will be to retain the

accent of reality. The individual living for many years among people of a different faith and cut off from the community of those sharing his own may continue to identify himself as, say, a Catholic. Through prayer, religious exercises, and similar techniques his old Catholic reality may continue to be subjectively relevant to him. At the very least the techniques may sustain his continued self-identification as a Catholic. They will, however, become subjectively empty of 'living' reality unless they are 'revitalized' by social contact with other Catholics. To be sure, an individual usually remembers the realities of his past. But the way to 'refresh' these memories is to converse with those who share their relevance.[23]

The plausibility structure is also the social base for the particular suspension of doubt without which the definition of reality in question cannot be maintained in consciousness. Here specific social sanctions against such reality-disintegrating doubts have been internalized and are ongoingly reaffirmed. Ridicule is one such sanction. As long as he remains within the plausibility structure, the individual feels himself to be ridiculous whenever doubts about the reality concerned arise subjectively. He knows that others would smile at him if he voiced them. He can silently smile at himself, mentally shrug his shoulders – and continue to exist within the world thus sanctioned. Needless to say, this procedure of autotherapy will be much more difficult if the plausibility structure is no longer available as its social matrix. The smile will become forced, and eventually is likely to be replaced by a pensive frown.

In crisis situations the procedures are essentially the same as in routine maintenance, except that the reality-confirmations have to be explicit and intensive. Frequently, ritual techniques are brought into play. While the individual may improvise reality-maintaining procedures in the face of crisis, the society itself sets up specific procedures for situations recognized as involving the risk of a breakdown in reality. Included in these predefined situations are certain marginal situations, of which death is by far the most important. Crises in reality, however, may occur in a considerably wider number of cases than are posited by marginal situations. They may be either collective or individual, depending upon the character of the challenge

to the socially defined reality. For example, collective rituals of reality-maintenance may be institutionalized for times of natural catastrophe, individual ones for times of personal misfortune. Or, to take another example, specific reality-maintaining procedures may be established to cope with foreigners and their potential threat to the 'official' reality. The individual may have to go through an elaborate ritual purification after contact with a foreigner. The ablution is internalized as a subjective nihilation of the alternative reality represented by the foreigner. Taboos, exorcisms and curses against foreigners, heretics or madmen similarly serve the purpose of individual 'mental hygiene'. The violence of these defensive procedures will be proportional to the seriousness with which the threat is viewed. If contacts with the alternative reality and its representatives become frequent, the defensive procedures may, of course, lose their crisis character and become routinized. Every time one meets a foreigner, say, one must spit three times – without giving much further thought to the matter.

Everything that has been said so far on socialization implies the possibility that subjective reality can be transformed. To be in society already entails an ongoing process of modification of subjective reality. To talk about transformation, then, involves a discussion of different degrees of modification. We will concentrate here on the extreme case, in which there is a near-total transformation; that is, in which the individual 'switches worlds'. If the processes involved in the extreme case are clarified, those of less extreme cases will be understood more easily.

Typically, the transformation is subjectively apprehended as total. This, of course, is something of a misapprehension. Since subjective reality is never totally socialized, it cannot be totally transformed by social processes. At the very least the transformed individual will have the same body and live in the same physical universe. Nevertheless, there are instances of transformation that appear total if compared with lesser modifications. Such transformations we will call alternations.[24]

Alternation requires processes of re-socialization. These processes resemble primary socialization, because they have radically to re-assign reality accents and, consequently, must replicate to a considerable degree the strongly affective identification with the socializing personnel that was characteristic of childhood. They are different from primary socialization because they do not start *ex nihilo*, and as a result must cope with a problem of dismantling, disintegrating the preceding nomic structure of subjective reality. How can this be done?

A 'recipe' for successful alternation has to include both social and conceptual conditions, the social, of course, serving as the matrix of the conceptual. The most important social condition is the availability of an effective plausibility structure, that is, a social base serving as the 'laboratory' of transformation. This plausibility structure will be mediated to the individual by means of significant others, with whom he must establish strongly affective identification. No radical transformation of subjective reality (including, of course, identity) is possible without such identification, which inevitably replicates childhood experiences of emotional dependency on significant others.[25] These significant others are the guides into the new reality. They represent the plausibility structure in the roles they play *vis-à-vis* the individual (roles that are typically defined explicitly in terms of their re-socializing function), and they mediate the new world to the individual. The individual's world now finds its cognitive and affective focus in the plausibility structure in question. Socially, this means an intense concentration of all significant interaction within the group that embodies the plausibility structure and particularly upon the personnel assigned the task of re-socialization.

The historical prototype of alternation is religious conversion. The above considerations can be applied to this by saying, *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. By *salus* we mean here (with due apologies to the theologians who had other things in mind when they coined the phrase) the empirically successful accomplishment of conversion. It is only within the religious community, the *ecclesia*, that the conversion can be effectively maintained as plausible. This is not to deny that conversion may antedate affiliation with the community – Saul of Tarsus sought out the Christian community *after* his 'Damascus experience'. But this is not the point. To have a conversion experience is nothing much. The real thing is to be able to keep on taking it seriously; to retain a sense of its plausibility.

This is where the religious community comes in. It provides the indispensable plausibility structure for the new reality. In other words, Saul may have become Paul in the aloneness of religious ecstasy, but he could *remain* Paul only in the context of the Christian community that recognized him as such and confirmed the 'new being' in which he now located this identity. This relationship of conversion and community is not a peculiarly Christian phenomenon (despite the historically peculiar features of the Christian *ecclesia*). One cannot remain a Muslim outside the *'umma* of Islam, a Buddhist outside the *sangha*, and probably not a Hindu anywhere outside India. Religion requires a religious community, and to live in a religious world requires affiliation with that community.[26] The plausibility structures of religious conversion have been imitated by secular agencies of alternation. The best examples are in the areas of political indoctrination and psychotherapy.[27]

The plausibility structure must become the individual's world, displacing all other worlds, especially the world the individual 'inhabited' before his alternation. This requires segregation of the individual from the 'inhabitants' of other worlds, especially his 'cohabitants' in the world he has left behind. Ideally this will be physical segregation. If that is not possible for whatever reasons, the segregation is posited by definition; that is, by a definition of those others that nihilates them. The alternating individual disaffiliates himself from his previous world and the plausibility structure that sustained it, bodily if possible, mentally if not. In either case he is no longer 'yoked together with unbelievers', and thus is protected from their potential reality-disrupting influence. Such segregation is particularly important in the early stages of alternation (the 'novitiate' phase). Once the new reality has congealed, circumspect relations with outsiders may again be entered into, although those outsiders who used to be biographically significant are still dangerous. They are the ones who will say, 'Come off it, Saul', and there may be times when the old reality they invoke takes the form of temptation.

Alternation thus involves a reorganization of the conversational apparatus. The partners in significant conversation change. And in conversation with the new significant others subjective reality is transformed. It is maintained by con-

tinuing conversation with them, or within the community they represent. Put simply, this means that one must now be very careful with whom one talks. People and ideas that are discrepant with the new definitions of reality are systematically avoided.[28] Since this can rarely be done with total success, if only because of the memory of past reality, the new plausibility structure will typically provide various therapeutic procedures to take care of 'backsliding' tendencies. These procedures follow the general pattern of therapy, as discussed earlier.

The most important conceptual requirement for alternation is the availability of a legitimating apparatus for the whole sequence of transformation. What must be legitimated is not only the new reality, but the stages by which it is appropriated and maintained, and the abandonment or repudiation of all alternative realities. The nihilating side of the conceptual machinery is particularly important in view of the dismantling problem that must be solved. The old reality, as well as the collectivities and significant others that previously mediated it to the individual, must be reinterpreted *within* the legitimating apparatus of the new reality. This reinterpretation brings about a rupture in the subjective biography of the individual in terms of 'B.C.' and 'A.D.', 'pre-Damascus' and 'post-Damascus'. Everything preceding the alternation is now apprehended as leading towards it (as an 'Old Testament', so to speak, or as *praeparatio evangelii*), everything following it as flowing from its new reality. This involves a reinterpretation of past biography *in toto*, following the formula, 'Then I *thought* . . . now I *know*'. Frequently this includes the retrojection into the past of present interpretative schemas (the formula for this being, 'I already knew then, though in an unclear manner . . .') and motives that were not subjectively present in the past but that are now necessary for the reinterpretation of what took place then (the formula being, 'I *really* did this because . . .'). Pre-alternation biography is typically nihilated *in toto* by subsuming it under a negative category occupying a strategic position in the new legitimating apparatus: 'When I was still living a life of sin', 'When I was still caught in bourgeois consciousness', 'When I was still motivated by these unconscious neurotic needs'. The biographical

rupture is thus identified with a cognitive separation of darkness and light.

In addition to this reinterpretation *in toto* there must be particular reinterpretations of past events and persons with past significance. The alternating individual would, of course, be best off if he could completely forget some of these. But to forget completely is notoriously difficult. What is necessary, then, is a radical reinterpretation of the meaning of these past events or persons in one's biography. Since it is relatively easier to invent things that never happened than to forget those that actually did, the individual may fabricate and insert events wherever they are needed to harmonize the remembered with the reinterpreted past. Since it is the new reality rather than the old that now appears dominatingly plausible to him, he may be perfectly 'sincere' in such a procedure – subjectively, he is not telling lies about the past but bringing it in line with *the* truth that, necessarily, embraces both present and past. This point, incidentally, is very important if one wishes to understand adequately the motives behind the historically recurrent falsifications and forgeries of religious documents. Persons, too, particularly significant others, are reinterpreted in this fashion. The latter now become unwilling actors in a drama whose meaning is necessarily opaque to them; and, not surprisingly, they typically reject such an assignment. This is the reason prophets typically fare badly in their home towns, and it is in this context that one may understand Jesus's statement that his followers must leave behind them their fathers and mothers.

It is not difficult now to propose a specific 'prescription' for alternation into any conceivable reality, however implausible from the standpoint of the outsider. It is possible to prescribe specific procedures for, say, convincing individuals that they can communicate with beings from outer space provided that and as long as they stay on a steady diet of raw fish. We can leave it to the imagination of the reader, if he is so inclined, to work out the details of such a sect of Ichthyosophists. The 'prescription' would entail the construction of an Ichthyosophist plausibility structure, properly segregated from the outside world and equipped with the necessary socializing and therapeutic personnel; the elaboration of an Ichthyosophist

body of knowledge, sufficiently sophisticated to explain why the self-evident nexus between raw fish and galactic telepathy had not been discovered before; and the necessary legitimations and nihilations to make sense of the individual's journey towards this great truth. If these procedures are followed carefully, there will be a high probability of success once an individual has been lured or kidnapped into the Ichthyosophist brainwashing institute.

There are in practice, of course, many intermediate types between re-socialization as just discussed and secondary socialization that continues to build on the primary internalizations. In these there are partial transformations of subjective reality or of designated sectors of it. Such partial transformations are common in contemporary society in connexion with the individual's social mobility and occupational training.[29] Here the transformation of subjective reality can be considerable, as the individual is made into an acceptable upper-middle-class type or an acceptable physician, and as he internalizes the appropriate reality-appendages. But these transformations typically fall far short of re-socialization. They build on the basis of primary internalizations and generally avoid abrupt discontinuities within the subjective biography of the individual. As a result, they face the problem of maintaining consistency between the earlier and later elements of subjective reality. This problem, not present in this form in re-socialization, which ruptures the subjective biography and reinterprets the past rather than correlating the present with it, becomes more acute the closer secondary socialization gets to re-socialization without actually becoming it. Re-socialization is a cutting of the Gordian knot of the consistency problem – by giving up the quest for consistency and reconstructing reality *de novo*.

The procedures for maintaining consistency also involve a tinkering with the past, but in a less radical manner – an approach dictated by the fact that in such cases there is usually a continuing association with persons and groups who were significant before. They continue to be around, are likely to protest too fanciful reinterpretations, and must themselves be convinced that such transformations as have taken place are plausible. For example, in the case of transformations occur-

ring in conjunction with social mobility, there are ready-made interpretative schemes that explain what has happened to all concerned *without* positing a total metamorphosis of the individual concerned. Thus the parents of such an upwardly mobile individual will accept certain changes in the latter's demeanour and attitudes as a necessary, possibly even desirable, accompaniment of his new station in life. 'Of course', they will agree, Irving has had to de-emphasize his Jewishness now that he has become a successful doctor in suburbia; 'of course' he dresses and speaks differently; 'of course' he now votes Republican; 'of course' he married a Vassar girl – and perhaps it will also become a matter of course that he only rarely comes to visit his parents. Such interpretative schemes, which are ready-made in a society with high upward mobility and already internalized by the individual before he himself is actually mobile, guarantee biographical continuity and smooth inconsistencies as they arise.[30]

Similar procedures take place in situations where transformations are fairly radical but defined as temporary in duration – for example, in training for short-term military service or in cases of short-term hospitalization.[31] Here the difference from full re-socialization is particularly easy to see – by comparing what happens with training for career military service or with the socialization of chronic patients. In the former instances, consistency with the previous reality and identity (existence as a civilian or as a healthy person) is already posited by the assumption that one will eventually return to these.

Broadly speaking, one may say that the procedures involved are of opposite character. In re-socialization the past is reinterpreted to conform to the present reality, with the tendency to retroject into the past various elements that were subjectively unavailable at the time. In secondary socialization the present is interpreted so as to stand in a continuous relationship with the past, with the tendency to minimize such transformations as have actually taken place. Put differently, the reality-base for re-socialization is the present, for secondary socialization the past.

2. Internalization and Social Structure

Socialization always takes place in the context of a specific social structure. Not only its contents but also its measure of 'success' have social-structural conditions and social-structural consequences. In other words, the micro-sociological or social-psychological analysis of phenomena of internalization must always have as its background a macro-sociological understanding of their structural aspects.[32]

On the level of theoretical analysis attempted here we cannot enter into a detailed discussion of the different empirical relationships between the contents of socialization and social-structural configurations.[33] Some general observations may, however, be made on the social-structural aspects of the 'success' of socialization. By 'successful socialization' we mean the establishment of a high degree of symmetry between objective and subjective reality (as well as identity, of course). Conversely, 'unsuccessful socialization' is to be understood in terms of asymmetry between objective and subjective reality. As we have seen, totally successful socialization is anthropologically impossible. Totally unsuccessful socialization is, at the very least, extremely rare, limited to cases of individuals with whom even minimal socialization fails because of extreme organic pathology. Our analysis must, therefore, be concerned with gradations on a continuum whose extreme poles are empirically unavailable. Such analysis is useful because it permits some general statements about the conditions and consequences of successful socialization.

Maximal success in socialization is likely to occur in societies with very simple division of labour and minimal distribution of knowledge. Socialization under such conditions produces identities that are socially predefined and profiled to a high degree. Since every individual is confronted with essentially